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PRE-BERLIN CONFERENCE DEVELOPMENTS - I

Soviet Proposal for a "European Solution":

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[redacted] at the Berlin conference the USSR intends to propose a "European solution" to the deadlock on the German and Austrian problems. While a Soviet maneuver of the type suggested appears unlikely, recent Soviet interest in European security plans foreshadows at least propaganda proposals on this subject.

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The obvious risk in a "European solution" from the Soviet viewpoint would be the possible loss of control or influence in the satellites and the creation of a Germany the Communists might not be able to control. Such a risk could be taken only if: (1) the USSR foresaw opportunity for long-term advantage in re-entering an area from which its direct influence is now excluded, or (2) it regarded such a proposal as solely a propaganda device which would never be implemented but might doom the EDC.

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There have been several indications that the Soviet Union will develop the security theme at the Berlin conference, but its emphasis is likely to be placed upon the dangers emanating from American foreign bases and aggressive alliances. Any proposals offered as an alternative to Western security arrangements are not likely to go beyond a Soviet sponsored system of bilateral or multilateral security pacts which would supersede the EDC.